

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 QUITO 03546 311832Z  
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
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O R 311745Z MAY 77  
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO  
TO AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE IMMEDIATE  
SECSTATE WASHDC 4524  
INFO AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 3546

FOR: AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE FOR BODINE S/S

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, ELAB, EC  
SUBJECT: COMPLETION OF THE FIRST STAGE OF "RETORNO": THE COMMISSIONS  
FINISH THEIR WORK

REF: QUITO 3158

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: IN A CEREMONY MAY 30, MINISTER OF GOVERNMENT JARRIN TURNED OVER THE TWO COMPLETED CONSTITUTIONAL DRAFTS TO THE SUPREME ELECTORAL TRIBUNAL. THE TWO DOCUMENTS HAVE FEW SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES AND ARE IN THE MAINSTREAM OF THE ECUADOREAN CONSTITUTIONAL TRADITION. TRIBUNAL PRESIDENT, GALO PLAZA AND ADMIRAL POVEDA, URGED ECUADOREANS TO KEEP POLITICAL ACTIVITY RESPONSIBLE AND WITHIN REASONABLE BOUNDS. THE GOE HAS DECLARED TO SET A SPECIFIC DATE FOR THE UPCOMING CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM. END SUMMARY.

2. IN A CEREMONY MAY 30, MINISTER OF GOVERNMENT COL. BOLIVAR JARRIN MARKED THE END OF THE FIRST STAGE OF THE GOE "RETORNO" PROCESS BY DELIVERING COMPLETED CONSTITUTIONAL DRAFTS TO  
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THE SUPREME ELECTORAL TRIBUNAL. THE TRIBUNAL WILL NOW PUBLICIZE THE DRAFTS AND PREPARE THE STAGE FOR THE REFERENDUM THAT WILL ALLOW FOR A PUBLIC CHOICE BETWEEN THE TWO DOCUMENTS. THE CONSTITUTIONS HAD BEEN COMPLETED AND TURNED OVER TO THE SUPREME COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENT BY THE TWO CONSTITUTIONAL COMMISSIONS MAY 23. THE GOE ALSO DELIVERED THE FIRST INSTALLMENT OF A TOTAL OF 25 MILLION SUCRES (APPROX. \$900,000 U.S.)

TO THE SUPREME ELECTORAL TRIBUNAL TO BE USED IN PUBLICIZING THE ALTERNATE CONSTITUTIONS.

3. SPEAKING ON MAY 24, THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE KEY BATTLE OF ECUADOR'S INDEPENDENCE, PRESIDENT OF THE SUPREME COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENT ADMIRAL ALFREDO POVEDA COMPLIMENTED THE TWO COMMISSIONS OF THEIR WORK AND SAID THAT THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT, SAID POVEDA, HAD PROVIDED THE COUNTRY WITH A CLIMATE OF PEACE, ORDER, LIBERTY, AND RESPECT FOR THE LAW. IT WAS NOW UP TO THE CIVILIANS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THEIR OPPORTUNITY BY CREATING STRONG AND VIABLE POLITICAL PARTIES BASED ON SPECIFIC POSITIONS AND MASS PUBLIC PARTICIPATION. PARTIES, HE ADDED ARE THE TOOLS THROUGH WHICH CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT IS MADE TO WORK.

4. POVEDA ALSO WARNED STRONGLY AGAINST FOREIGN POLITICAL IDEAS. ECUADOR IS GOING THROUGH CRUCIAL PERIOD AND CITIZENS SHOULD AVOID FOREIGN POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES (READ COMMUNISM) THAT ARE NOW BEING USED TO OPPOSE THE GOVERNMENT AND DESTROY NATIONAL HARMONY. FINALLY, POVEDA WARNED HIS COUNTRYMEN TO KEEP POLITICAL ACTIVITY WITHIN ACCEPTED BOUNDS AND HINTED BROADLY THAT THE MILITARY FEELS ITSELF OBLIGATED TO INTERVENE IF THE PROCESS GETS OUT OF HAND.

5. IN HIS COMMENTS IN THE MAY 30 ACCEPTANCE CEREMONY, GALO PLAZA REPEATED POVEDA'S ADMONITION AND URGED THE NATION TO WORK TOWARD THE RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE AND NOT LOSE THE OPPORTUNITY BY FORCING THE MILITARY TO INTERVENE IN THE INTERESTS OF PUBLIC ORDER.

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6. ADDING A TOUCH OF UNCERTAINTY TO THE PROCESS, MINISTER OF GOVERNMENT COL. BOLIVAR JARRIN DECLINED TO PROVIDE THE DATE FOR THE UPCOMING REFERENDUM, SAYING THAT DELAYS IN THE ISSUANCE OF NEW IDENTIFICATION CARDS (CEDULAS) WOULD REQUIRE A POSTPONEMENT OF THE REFERENDUM (IT HAD BEEN ORIGINALLY THOUGHT IMPLEMENTABLE BY SEPTEMBER OF THIS YEAR.) ON MAY 30 GALO PLAZA REPEATED JARRIN'S REMARKS SAYING THAT THE REFERENDUM WOULD HAVE TO AWAIT THE COMPLETION OF THE RECEDULATION PROCESS. BOTH MEN REFUSED TO SPECULATE ON A POSSIBLE DATE.

7. COMMENT: THE PUBLIC HAS RECEIVED THE COMPLETION OF THE COMMISSIONS' WORK WITH LITTLE EXCITEMENT (EMB WILL PROVIDE ANALYSIS OF TWO DRAFTS IN NEXT SEVERAL DAYS). ALSO, THE STATEMENTS BY JARRIN AND PLAZA THAT THE REFERENDUM WOULD BE POSTPONED PROVOKED VIRTUALLY NO REACTION. THE PUBLIC STILL APPARENTLY BELIEVES IN THE GOOD FAITH OF THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT AND FEELS THAT A SHORT POSTPONEMENT OF THE REFERENDUM TO ALLOW THE COMPLETION OF THE IDENTIFICATION

CARD PROCESS IS NOT TERRIBLY SIGNIFICANT. THE FIRST COMMISSION ALSO APPARENTLY ACCEPTED A DELAY IN THE GOE'S ORIGINAL TIME TABLE WHEN IT PROVIDED FOR ECUADOR'S NEW PRESIDENT TO TAKE OFFICE JUNE 1, 1978 AND FOR THE CONGRESS TO ENTER OFFICE NOVEMBER 1, 1978. THE GOVERNMENT HAD ORIGINALLY CALLED FOR A TRANSFER OF POWER IN JANUARY, 1978.

8. POVEDA'S REMARKS, ON THE SURFACE, PROVIDED FURTHER REINFORCEMENT OF THE GOE'S INTENTION TO TURN OVER POWER TO CIVILIANS BUT ALSO SERVED NOTICE THAT THE MILITARY WILL NOT STAND BY AND ACCEPT CIVIL DISORDER WITH THE PROCESS. EARLIER SUCH COMMENTS BY THE MILITARY HAD BEEN SEIZED UPON BY SOME POLITICIANS AS EVIDENCE OF THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT'S BAD FAITH, BUT POVEDA'S DECLARATION THIS TIME HAS GONE VIRTUALLY UNREMARKED.

9. FINALLY, POVEDA'S CAUTION AGAINST FOREIGN IDEOLOGIES  
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MAY RELATE TO THE GOE HARD-LINE REACTION AGAINST THE THREE NATIONAL LABOR CONFEDERATIONS AND THE NATIONAL TEACHERS' FEDERATION THAT PARTICIPATED IN A JOINT NATIONAL STRIKE MAY 18 (QUITO 3334). TWO OF THOSE CONFEDERATIONS ARE COMMUNIST DOMINATED.  
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## Message Attributes

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